information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Telephone revenue arrears

1817. SHRI ABANI ROY: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Telephone revenue arrears of DoT have increased as compared to the previous year;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the reasons for increase in arrears; and

(d) the steps taken by Government to recover the arrears?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) and (b) The operational arm of DoT became a corporation (Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited) on 1.10.2000 and all the assets (including telephone arrears) and liabilities of DoT were passed on to BSNL. DoT thus no longer has any telephone revenue or revenue arrears on date.

The telephone revenue arrears of the BSNL have increased as follows over the previous year:

Year	Unpaid bills as on 31st March
1999-2000	Rs. 2374 crores Rs.
2000-2001	2803 crores

Note: These are cumulative arreas for 10 years and include bills issued in the month of March, for which payments were still to come in. So the amount billed grows each year, the cumulative arreass are seen to remain at 15-16% of the total billed amount each year.

(c) The reasons for increase in arrears are as follows:

(i) Unwillingness on the part of subscribers to pay the bills.

(ii) Bills issued correctly but perceived by the subscriber as inflated.

(iii) Bills may not reaching subscribers in time.

(iv) Subscribers not using their dynamic STD lock.

(d) The various steps taken to recover the telephone revenue arrears are as follows:

1. Telephonic reminders are issued to the defaulting subscribers to clear their dues, failing which their telephones are disconnected.
2. Telephone Revenue Inspectors and field staff are deputed to visit the defaulting subscribers to pursue the clearing of dues, failing which other telephones of the defaulting subscribers are also disconnected.
3. Incentive is given to staff for ensuring early recovery of outstanding dues.
4. If the above steps do not bring results, recovery suits are filed against the defaulters wherever feasible.
5. Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited sets annual targets for liquidation of outstanding for its field units and periodically monitors realisation against the targets fixed. Liquidation Boards in each unit/Circle of Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited are functioning to liquidate old outstanding dues.
6. As per recent guidelines framed by BSNL, Circles have been authorised to utilise the services of the Police, Revenue and other Departments of the State Government, whenever necessary, and pay a commission of upto 1.5% of the amount recovered.

Refusal to provide funds for rural telephone facilities

†1818. SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Finance Ministry has turned down the demand of Bharat Sanchar Nigam for Rs. 2500 crores to make available telephone facilities in the villages;

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.